

A Taiji Lesson

Kuai Jian had recently moved to the capital and had made many new friends at the early morning Taiji sessions in Purple Bamboo Park. This morning, Kuai Jian was one of the first to arrive by the lake where the teacher was waiting, sipping chrysanthemum tea from a flask. The teacher had been watching the group's steady progress with each new posture that was introduced and decided it was time to invite Kuai Jian to look beyond the physical movements. The teacher simply asked, "What is it that you practice when you move in the Form?"

Kuai Jian clearly knew the answer to be the health benefits of the exercise and relaxation of the tensions in the body and mind, and said so. On hearing this the teacher smiled kindly, and seeing the rest of the group arriving and taking their places, simply said, "Feel what you practice, listen to your mind."

Kuai Jian joined the group and began warming up with the others. The teachers' advice seemed to reverberate in the air all around the group, even though it was only spoken softly to Kuai Jian.

As they came into the Attention Posture, Kuai Jian again heard the question, "What is it that you practice when you move in the Form?" then, "Feel what you practice, listen to your mind." Something released deep inside, there was a letting go of the conscious mind's false clarity about motivation and a sudden realisation of the unconscious stream of thoughts running in the background "I hope I can keep in time with the others", "Sheng Wei is much

better at Taiji than me", "I must remember to keep my weight still in White Crane Spreads it's Wings", "I wish I could leave out that new posture all together, I'll never get it right!....."

Kuai Jian felt both shock and delight in the same moment.

"All this time I thought I had been practising relaxation yet my thought patterns have been telling me I'm not as good as others and I never will be! What I have actually been practising all this time is worry and fear."

Some weeks later, after failing many times, Kuai Jian was able to become aware of those critical thought patterns before they took hold and bring the mind consciously back into the moment; feeling what was real in each movement and allowing true relaxation to occur. This in turn gave nowhere for the false criticisms of a fearful mind to take hold.

Kuai Jian had found the connection between body and mind, and how they interact with, and rely upon each other. Yin and Yang. Taiji.

What do you practice?

If you practice worrying you will become an expert in the 'Way of the Worrier.'

If you practice the Taiji principles you will become an expert in being present, centred, and able to respond to each situation appropriately. You will become Taiji.